



WISCONSIN WELLHEAD PROTECTION NEWS

Spring 2005



HAPPY SPRING!

Hi everyone. It's time to celebrate the completion of the source water assessments for all public water supply systems. Yea! We also celebrate Drinking Water Week coming May 1-7 and congratulate the communities who have developed wellhead protection (WHP) plans in the past several months. In this newsletter, you can also read about the possible use of the federal Conservation Reserve Program in WHP areas, a restructuring of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater, and where we are with the new groundwater quantity law. Enjoy!

Dave Lindorff, Editor

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations are in order for a number of municipal systems who are or have been involved in wellhead protection (WHP) planning to protect their water supply wells. Almena, Bloomer, Crivitz, Delavan, Dickeyville, Fairwater, Footville, Grantsburg, Hillsboro, Lakeland SD, LaValle, Loyal, Markesan, Marshall, Minong, Omro, Rice Lake, St. Nazianz, Shullsburg, Stratford, Valders, Westby and Wisconsin Dells have worked with or are working with WDNR or Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA) staff on wellhead protection

plans, ordinances or both. You are commended for being proactive in protecting your water supply.

Communities which have developed wellhead protection plans for new wells since the last newsletter include Amery, Augusta, Cottage Grove, Darien, Dodgeville, East Troy, Hollandale, Ladysmith, Muskego, City of Pewaukee, Portage, Spencer, Thorp and Wisconsin Veterans Home. Hats off to these communities as well for recognizing the importance of wellhead protection. Good work!

There are now over 260 communities which, according to WDNR records, have adopted a plan for at least one of their wells. Check out the list at dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gw/whp/communities.pdf.

If you would like assistance from the WDNR in getting started, contact me by phone (877-268-9355 toll free), by fax (608-267-7650), by email (david.lindorff@dnr.state.wi.us) or regular mail (Wisconsin DNR, P. O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921).

You can also contact Ed Morse, Groundwater Specialist for the WRWA, at 920-648-7578 or edmorse@charter.net.

As I indicated in the last newsletter, Patrick Harrington has been hired by WRWA as a Source Water Protection Specialist. His focus is on working with local entities in basins or watersheds to promote coordinated efforts to protect groundwater and surface water. Patrick can be reached by calling 715-498-0383 or emailing him at wrwa-sourcewater@sbcglobal.net.

Another option is to contact an engineering firm or a professional hydrogeologist to help develop a wellhead protection plan. Check your yellow pages for engineering firms or hydrogeologists in your area.

CELEBRATE DRINKING WATER WEEK MAY 1-7!

It's time to celebrate our valuable drinking water resources that we enjoy in Wisconsin. Drinking Water Week (as designated by the American Water Works Association) is coming May 1-7. Please take the time to let others know about this valuable resource and the need to protect it. Here are some ideas for doing that.

- Have an open house at your water utility.
- Volunteer to talk to school children about where their water comes from and the importance of protecting their drinking water.
- Promote your community's Consumer Confidence Report in the media.
- Explore the resources available to help communities learn about groundwater, including the WDNR (dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gw/index.htm), the Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center (www.uwsp.edu/cnr/gndwater/), the Portage County groundwater website (www.uwsp.edu/water/portage/main/index.htm), the Groundwater Foundation (www.groundwater.org), the American Water Works Association (www.awwa.org/advocacy/dww), local colleges or universities, water utilities, and environmental consultants, among others.
- Invite a local expert to come talk at a public meeting about groundwater conditions in your area. Show the 16-minute DNR video, "Wellhead Protection – An Ounce of Prevention" available from Dave Lindorff.
- Begin planning for your long-term water supply needs through wellhead protection and comprehensive planning.
- Promote wise use of water.
- Check with your local schools to see if they have the DNR's Groundwater Study Guide which contains a wide variety of groundwater activities. The packet is free by contacting Dave Lindorff.
- Promote a resolution by the local government proclaiming May 1-7 as Drinking Water Week.
- Talk to Jen Kingsley (715-346-2722 or jen.kingsley@uwsp.edu) about forming a Groundwater Guardian committee in your community. Visit the Wisconsin Groundwater Guardian website at www.uwsp.edu/cnr/gwguardian.

Here's a chance to celebrate how blessed we are with abundant groundwater resources.

SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENTS – THEY'RE FINISHED!

We made it! Regional WDNR Source Water Assessment staff completed the source water assessments for all 11,000 plus public water systems by the December 31, 2004 deadline. The assessments for municipal systems were hand delivered. The other systems were notified that their assessment was completed and that they could request that a copy be hand delivered.

Summaries of the assessments are on the WDNR's source water assessment website at dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/swap/index.htm. All assessments for surface water systems are completed and available in their entirety at the above website.

If you have questions about source water assessments, contact Jeff Helmuth, WDNR Source Water Assessment Program Coordinator, at (608) 266-5234 or jeffrey.helmuth@dnr.state.wi.us. You can also visit the WDNR source water assessment website at the URL noted above.

NEXT STEPS – ASSESSMENTS TO PROTECTION

Now that the assessments have been delivered, the focus of the source water program is now on protection. Each community has a wonderful opportunity to review its assessment and use that information to tailor a protection plan to meet its particular needs.

Each assessment contains the source water area delineated by the WDNR for each well, the potential contaminant sources within the source water area, and a discussion of the susceptibility (low, moderate or susceptible) of each well to contamination by six classes of contaminants. A community can identify which well or wells are most susceptible to contamination and consider ways that the well susceptibility might be reduced. The first priority would be a well that is "susceptible" to one or more contaminants. Wells "moderately susceptible" to one or more contaminants would be a lower priority.

The articles that follow offer some ideas for protecting your water supply. If you'd like help with wellhead protection planning, see the contacts on the front page of this newsletter. There is also a variety of information available at the WDNR's WHP website at dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gw/wellhead.htm and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's)

source water protection website at www.epa.gov/safewater/protect.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM IN WELLHEAD PROTECTION AREAS

One of the ways to reduce the threat of potential contaminant sources in WHP areas is to eliminate those potential sources. The federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a program designed to take agricultural cropland out of production. Farmers that use croplands in wellhead protection areas (up to 2000 feet from a municipal well) could be eligible for cost-sharing and annual rental payments through the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to fund conversion of the land to conservation practices that would reduce the impact on the environment.

Farmers would sign a contract for a 10-15 year period, depending on the conservation practice being installed. Besides an annual rental payment to the farmer, up to 50% of the cost of converting the land to a conservation practice may be reimbursed.

The WDNR has met with staff from the Farm Service Agency and WRWA to work out details for implementing this program in Wisconsin. We are now exploring the best way to share locational information between agencies. The plan is to have the process worked out this spring.

We hope this will become an opportunity for farmers to convert cropland to conservation practices that will be protective to the environment. If you think there is cropland within your WHP area, contact your county FSA office or Ed Morse of WRWA to follow through.

PROTECTING THE SOURCE

Another way communities can protect their drinking water supplies is through land conservation as described in two recent publications from the American Water Works Association and the Trust for Public Land. You can learn more about them out at www.tpl.org/publications.

Using case studies from around the country, "Protecting the Source" makes the case for land conservation and identifies practices to help communities control the land which is the source of its drinking water, either surface water or groundwater. Those practices are to: understand your watershed, use maps and models to prioritize protection, build strong partnerships and work watershed-wide, create a comprehensive source

water protection plan and develop and implement a "funding quilt", that is, funding from multiple sources. This report can be downloaded at www.tpl.org/content_documents/protecting_the_source_04.pdf.

The other publication is "The Source Water Protection Handbook: Using Land Conservation to Protect Local Drinking Water". The handbook, available for \$25, provides resources to help a community make the case for land conservation and also go about actually conserving those lands. How-to sections include: understanding your watershed, prioritizing land for protection, building strong partnerships, designing a comprehensive source protection plan, financing the conservation of land, protecting priority parcels and managing the land. It also includes case studies.

EXAMPLE PROTECTION ORDINANCES

One of the options communities have is to adopt an ordinance to protect its source water/wellhead protection area. There are four example ordinances on the WDNR wellhead protection website at dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/whp/whp_orde.pdf. I also have this packet of ordinances available in paper format that I can mail you and as a Word document that I can email you.

There are also example ordinances on the EPA's website. If you go to www.epa.gov/owow/nps/ordinance/mol7.htm, there is an example groundwater protection ordinance. You can check out other example ordinances by clicking on "links" or by typing "groundwater" in the search box and clicking on "go."

BUREAU OF DRINKING WATER AND GROUNDWATER RESTRUCTURING

You may have heard that Don Swales, Chief of the Drinking Water Quality Section, left the WDNR in October. Lee Boushon was appointed Acting Chief of that section along with his responsibilities as Chief of the Drinking Water Systems Section. On February 1, 2005, Bureau Director Jill Jonas announced that the two sections have been combined into the Public Water Supply Section with Lee as the Chief of the combined section. Lee can be reached at 608-266-0857 or lee.boushon@dnr.state.wi.us.



GROUNDWATER QUANTITY LAW UPDATE

I reported on the new groundwater quantity law in the fall newsletter. The Governor has requested 5 new positions in his 2005-2007 State budget to administer the new law. Until these positions are filled, the WDNR will not be proceeding with implementation of the new high capacity well review requirements.

The legislation also called for the appointment of a Groundwater Advisory Committee. Several members have been appointed, but the Committee has not yet met. For updates and other information on groundwater quantity issues in Wisconsin, see dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gcc/gw_quantity_res.htm.

The Wisconsin Wellhead Protection Newsletter is a publication of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater. Its purpose is to provide current information on wellhead protection topics. It is published in the spring and fall and as needed.

Comments, questions, suggestions and articles are welcome and can be sent to: David Lindorff, Editor, Wisconsin Wellhead Protection Newsletter, Department of Natural Resources, P. O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921
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The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C. 20240. This newsletter is available in an alternate format upon request. If interested, please contact David Lindorff, Editor.
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